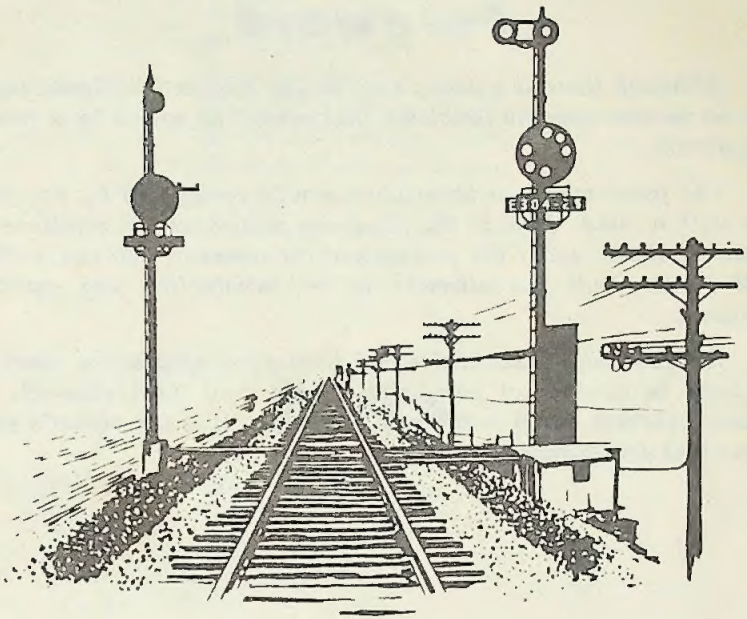
DISPATCHER®



by Avalon Hill

T.M.

Foreword

Although there is nothing easy in any Avalon Hill Game, there are no insurmountable problems that cannot be solved by a thinking person.

The game-problems themselves can be recognized by any person with a mind. It is in the discovery of the correct solutions to these problems, under the pressure of the moment, that the Avalon Hill player finds the ultimate in self-satisfaction and genuine pleasure.

We guarantee that Avalon Hill Games are accurate in concept, realistic in conduct of play and contain only those elements of chance inherent in the subject of the game. It is the player's skill alone that determines the result.

THE AVALON HILL COMPANY

Baltimore 2, Maryland, U.S.A.

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COMPONENTS

1—44 by 14 inch Trainboard
8—System Timetable Cards
2—Departure Time Cards
24—Situation Cards
1—Instruction Book
34—First Class train counters
8—Second Class train counters
42—Third Class train counters
12—Helper locomotive counters
2—Boxes for counters
1—Registration Card

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CHAPTER ONE - THE BASIC GAME

I. INTRODUCTION

Thank you very much for your confidence in purchasing a DISPATCHER set. You have joined a family of players with the same enthusiasm for the fascinating subject of railroading.

May we suggest that you fill in the Registration Card included in this set and mail it. By doing so, you will become eligible for a two-point service program . . . *first*, you will be entitled to an explanation service which will answer any number of questions you may have concerning conduct of play . . . *second*, your name will be placed on an advisory list that will gain you full information about other new games that we will publish in the future.

II. PURPOSE OF THE GAME

DISPATCHER is a realistic railroad operating game in which the players take the part of Division Dispatchers.

The game is won by a Dispatcher moving all of the trains for which he is responsible across his division with less demerit points than his opponent.

DISPATCHER is a completely realistic, all-skill game. The only elements of chance introduced into the conduct of play are those inherent in any railroad operation. Players do not need prior railroad experience.

III. THE TRAINBOARD

The trainboard represents a "straight line" schematic diagram of two divisions of a fictional railroad, somewhat similar to a Centralized Traffic Control Diagram (CTC). Use of this method of presentation provides a more graphic view of the situation on the railroad at any given time.

The railroad is divided into two divisions . . . the Eastern Division and the Western Division. The dividing line is at the east end of PA tower and the entrance to Glen Yard. Each player operates a division.

The Eastern Division runs from the terminals View (VI), Taney (TA), Branch (BR) and Seaside (SE) on a converging route westward to HX tower, which is at the foot of a mountain range. From KD to Summit (SU) is uphill and all westbound freight trains require Helper service to top the grade, as do eastbound freight

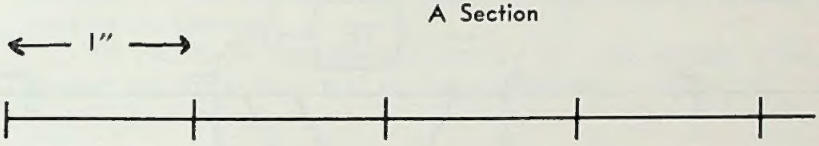
trains from PA to SU. The "Low Line" running directly from HX to PA is gradeless and no helpers are required. Because, however, the Low Line route is longer than the mountain route, all First Class trains must travel the HX-KD-SU-WN-PA route. The Low Line operates under Centralized Traffic Control, use of which will be explained later.

There is a Helper Yard with a capacity of nine locomotives entering at KD on the eastern side of the mountains. Helpers attach to westbound trains at this point.

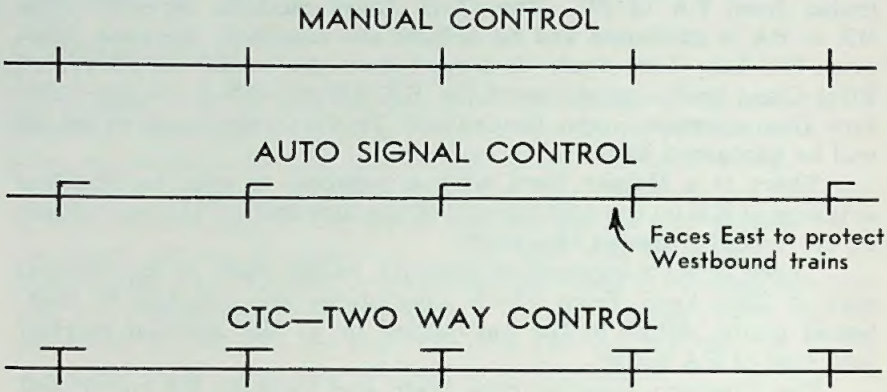
There is a six-locomotive capacity helper yard as an integral part of Glen Yard, from which locomotives are attached to eastbound trains either in the yard itself or at the location marked just east of PA tower.

The Western Division runs from and includes PA tower and Glen Yard westward to Damascus (DA), Elsburg (EL), Avalon (AV) and Johnstown (JO). There are no helper-service grades on the Western Division, but there is much intercity traffic that does not affect the Eastern Division. Centralized Traffic Control is in operation from DA through VO and EL to JO and from EL to PA. The fact that the Western Division is less in area than the Eastern and without mountains should not mislead players into thinking that it is easier to operate.

The blue lines represent tracks . . . *not* rails. Each track is broken down into *sections* . . . each train counter fits a section and all movement is based on these sections.

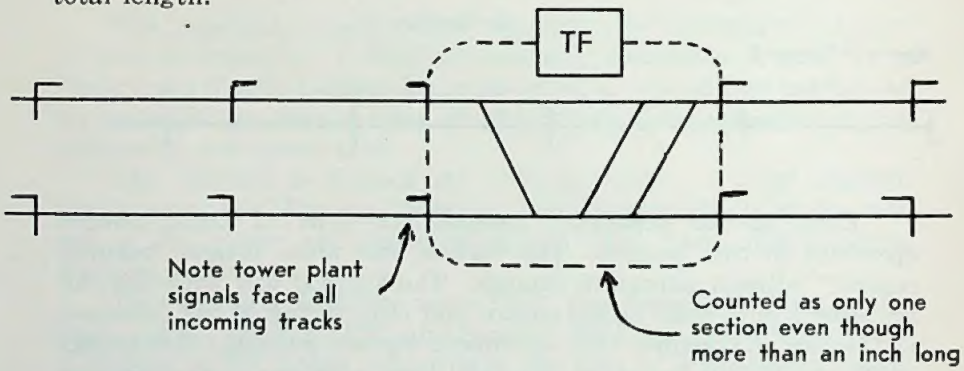


Each section separator denotes the type of train control operative in that section. The vertical line alone means "manual control" without automatic signals. The vertical line with one ear represents automatic signal control but only facing in the direction of the ear. Remember that automatic signals guarding westbound traffic would face eastward. Vertical lines with two ears represent either CTC or two-way traffic control, meaning that trains may operate in either direction with full signal protection.



The terminal areas . . . such as VI, SE, etc. . . . are enclosed with red lines and include identified spaces with the numbers of the train counters belonging there at the *beginning* of the game. The boxed, red, two-letter identifications . . . such as HX, KD, etc. . . . represent towers that appear as timetable points in the system timetables.

Each section is one inch long, but in tower areas the space requirements for crossovers necessitate using more space. Tower plant areas are enclosed by black dotted lines to make their total area stand out more readily . . . but remember that each "tower plant" is the equivalent of one regular section *regardless* of its total length.



Players are only concerned with supervising main line traffic between terminals. Terminal and Yard operations are under control of respective Terminal Dispatchers and it is assumed that their problems do not affect the players in this game.

IV. CONDUCT OF PLAY

DISPATCHER is basically a two player game . . . each player being a Division Dispatcher. There is not, however, any necessary limit on the total number of players. Additional players may be used as Assistant Dispatchers or Relief Dispatchers, and as will be shown, their presence can make the game more interesting.

A full DISPATCHER game covers a 24 hour period beginning at 8:00 am. First, players should study the timetables and place their train counters in the appropriate terminal locations. Then they determine who will be first to move during each Complete Turn, which is measured as an increment of one hour. There is no particular advantage in being first to move.

Each player moves his trains during each Complete Turn according to rules that will be explained.

The new player should recognize that the first few games played will probably run several hours. However, once the players have become experienced, average time for a complete "24 hour" game drops to about an hour and a half.

It is imperative that a new player become thoroughly conversant with the *mechanics* of play and the details of the trainboard before becoming too concerned with clever timetable operation. DISPATCHER is a somewhat deceptive game in one sense of the word. Other Avalon Hill games appear difficult at first but are really quite simple to play. DISPATCHER appears simple at first, but is really the most difficult to play successfully. Each game will start slowly, then progress in complication as the trains begin to move. Patience, study, use of common sense and a thinking attitude will develop an expert player regardless of previous railroading background.

We guarantee that the new player will soon develop a healthy respect for the typical real railroad dispatcher.

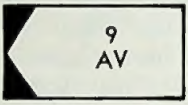
CHAPTER TWO-

MECHANICS OF PLAY

I. CLASSES OF TRAINS

In the game of DISPATCHER there are four classes of trains, which are . . .

FIRST CLASS—Passenger, Mail and Express Trains. Each of these trains is represented by a Red Counter . . . an example follows. The arrow shows direction of movement, the number is the train number and the letters on the bottom denote the *destination* . . . *not* the origin.



SECOND CLASS—Timetable-operated Merchandise Express (ME) Freight Trains, each represented by a White Counter. Here again, the arrow shows direction, the top line is the train identification and the letters on the bottom denote the destination.

THIRD CLASS—Drag Freight Trains, non-timetable, broken down into Symbol Freights (SF), Extra Freights (EF) and Mineral Freights (MF), each represented by a Blue Counter. The meaning of the markings is the same as on previous classes.

HELPERS—Light locomotives available in the HX-PA area, to assist Second and Third Class trains over the mountain . . . each a gray counter. The helper is always moving in the direction shown when the word HELPER is right side up. They may reverse direction immediately, as they are double-ended diesel units.

Please note that all westbound trains carry odd numbers and all eastbound trains carry even numbers. The First and Second Class trains are all operated by timetable. The expression "JO-EL" means Johnstown *via* Elsburg.

II. MOVEMENT

Remember that each Complete Turn represents one hour "on the ground." During each Complete Turn, each class of train is capable of moving a different distance.

Each FIRST CLASS train moves forward *four sections* during each complete turn (fifteen minutes per section).

Each SECOND CLASS train moves forward *three sections* during each complete turn (twenty minutes per section).

Each THIRD CLASS TRAIN and HELPERS move forward *two sections* during each complete turn (thirty minutes per section).

During Backward Movement, each train regardless of class may only move one section per complete turn . . . except HELPERS, which may move the same distance in either direction.

Only one train may occupy a section at any given time, *except* that a helper may be in the same section as the train it is assisting. The helper counter may be placed on top of the train counter.

III. DEMERIT POINTS

The competitive element in the game DISPATCHER is contained in the Demerit Point system, which simply means that each Dispatcher is charged with demerits when any of his trains are delayed or for other specific reasons to be explained.

a. TRAIN DELAY—When a player's train cannot move its full allowance of sections, the player is charged with a number of demerits equal to the full section allowance of the train affected. If a First Class train only moves, say, three sections instead of its normal four sections, the responsible player is charged with four demerits. For Second Class trains, the penalty is three demerits

and for Third Class trains it is two demerits. Helper delays do not carry a penalty. It should be remembered that the full demerit penalty is incurred regardless of the number of sections delayed . . . for example, a Second Class train may only be able to move two sections (a loss of one section from its allowance of three) yet it is still charged with a full demerit of 3 points.

b. YARD DELAY—All First and Second Class trains must operate by the timetables supplied in your set. Third Class trains, however, are squeezed in wherever possible without a timetable requirement. At the end of each complete turn, each player is charged with one demerit point for each Third Class train that has not yet left its terminal or yard location. This is done to penalize the player who plays it "safe" by not moving out his Third Class trains promptly. At the end of the "24 hour" game, each player receives a further penalty of 5 demerits for each Third Class train that has not left its terminal or yard location.

IV. COLLISION

It has been pointed out that there are three separate and distinct types of *control* on this railroad . . . MANUAL CONTROL, AUTOMATIC SIGNAL CONTROL and CENTRALIZED TRAFFIC CONTROL or TWO WAY AUTOMATIC SIGNAL CONTROL.

To discuss MANUAL CONTROL, let's take as an example the stretch of single track from FR to BRANCH. There are no signals on this route. Consequently, to avoid headon collisions, only one train may be operated in an opposing direction at any one time. If a train leaves BRANCH, it must arrive at FR before an eastbound train can be allowed to pass FR going to BRANCH. Otherwise collision is inevitable. Two trains may, however, operate in the *same* direction on the same track without fear of collision. Of course, we assume that appropriate safety measures by the leading train's crew will be observed.

In the case of AUTOMATIC SIGNAL CONTROL, *following* trains are completely protected . . . but trains running *against* the current of traffic are *not* protected. Use as an example the stretch of double track from Seaside to FR. Each track has Automatic Signal protection in one direction. If, however, a player wants to run a westbound train on the eastbound track, the signals do not protect him. Consequently, in this example, no trains may enter the eastbound track at FR until the subject train has cleared. To do so means automatic collision.

With CTC or Two Way Signals, trains travelling in either direction have full protection. From HX to PA, for example, the center track is equipped with two way signals to facilitate helper return movements.

The significance of signal protection to the player is very important, because a player will be charged with a penalty of 50 demerits if he causes a collision. In addition, the track on which the collision has occurred will be "out of commission" for the balance of the game.

Players are cautioned to be very careful about opposing traffic movements . . . it is very easy to slip up for a moment and let a train get by the last control point. And if this occurs, the player must let the collision occur if he has removed his hand from the offending counter.

It should be noted that each tower plant has signals facing against *all* incoming tracks, so that there is no fear of a collision in a plant.

V. SITUATION CARDS

Included in your set are 24 Situation Cards, each of which introduces an unexpected development affecting the operation of the railroad . . . everything from sticking brakes to hotboxes and minor derailments.

At the beginning of each complete turn, the players must turn up the top Situation Card and apply the instructions thereon to the train operation.

Demerits must be charged at the usual rate for all delays caused by these incidents.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS RULES AND COMMENTS

a. For your convenience, all of the tracks are numbered. Please examine the Trainboard carefully.

b. There is one exception to Demerit Point-Train Delay rule. If a player starts a Third Class train from a terminal, he may follow it up with another Third Class train (which will only be able to move forward one section) without incurring a penalty on the second train.

c. At PA tower, all Third Class trains must enter Glen Yard and go to either the West or East Yard, depending upon their direction. All First and Second Class trains bypass Glen Yard, but remember that eastbound Second Class trains must stop east of PA to pick up their helpers if they are travelling the cross-mountain route. As noted on the timetable, certain ME trains may use the Low Line without penalty. All other First and Second Class trains are assumed by timetable to use the mountain route. Players may deflect them to the Low Line if they desire, but they auto-

matically incur the full Train Delay penalty *once* even though the trains were not actually stopped. This is done because the Low Line is a longer route.

d. To pick up a helper, a Second or Third Class train must come to a full stop in the section designated. Then the helper is moved into the same section and placed atop the train counter. Allowance for this delay is made in ME timetables. The basic train does *not* incur the Train Delay penalty in helper hook-on periods. Both the entrance of the freight train into the hook-on section *and* the helper move to hook-on may be done in one turn. Trains may not, however, move forward until the next turn.

e. The trains included in the timetable will be able to move without confliction or delay. The only congestion will occur at PA late in the evening when several eastbound ME trains arrive at about the same time. This situation can be relieved by sending one train via the Low Line and the other two uphill side by side on tracks 2 and 3. Provision for this is made in the timetable.

f. Players who operate the Eastern Division are cautioned to be sure that they return helpers to the bottom of the hill as quickly as possible. There is nothing more discouraging than to watch eight or nine trains back up awaiting a helper to move a blocking freight train. Note that at SU there is a siding with a capacity of five helpers.

g. At the beginning of the game, six helpers are placed in the KD Helper Yard and six in the Glen Helper Yard.

h. It is assumed that all Terminal and Yard areas have complete turnaround facilities.

i. All non-CTC sidings are assumed to have "Take Siding" indicators, which means that Dispatchers do not have to decide whether or not a train must go into a siding before leaving the last control point in non-CTC territory.

j. Learn to think in terms of time-per-section. During each Complete Turn, players are advancing their trains the distance they can travel in an hour. If a First Class train, for example, is scheduled to leave at 8:15, it will only be able to go forward *three* sections before the complete turn is over. Leaving at 8:30, it will only be able to go forward *two* sections in that hour.

k. All . . . repeat . . . all Third Class trains must enter Glen Yard and then revert to the control of the *receiving* Dispatcher. There is no obligation on the receiver's part to immediately move a new train, although he is charged with one demerit for each complete turn that the train is not moved. For example, a westbound freight has just left the Eastern Division. It enters the Glen Westbound Yard. From then on, Eastern Division Dispatcher is finished with

that train. The Western Division Dispatcher moves it on to its destination whenever he feels that it is possible. During the wait, if any, Western Dispatcher is charged a demerit the same as if that train were in, say, Avalon Terminal.

l. Shorter games can be accomplished simply by setting the "time" of ending before the game begins. All games begin at 8:00 am, but players may decide to end the game at, say, 2:00 pm and determine the winner by totalling demerit points at that time.

VII. ROUTINE OF PLAY

Here is a condensation of the steps each player must take during a typical Complete Turn . . .

ONE—Turn up the top Situation Card and see if train operations are affected.

TWO—Move *all* trains on the tracks according to the rules. When, for example, the Western Dispatcher is moving his trains, the Eastern Dispatcher records his opponent's demerits . . . and vice versa. When using Assistant Dispatchers (3 or 4 player game), they may record their opponents' demerits.

THREE—Consult the Departure Card and move out timetable trains plus as many Third Class trains as practical.

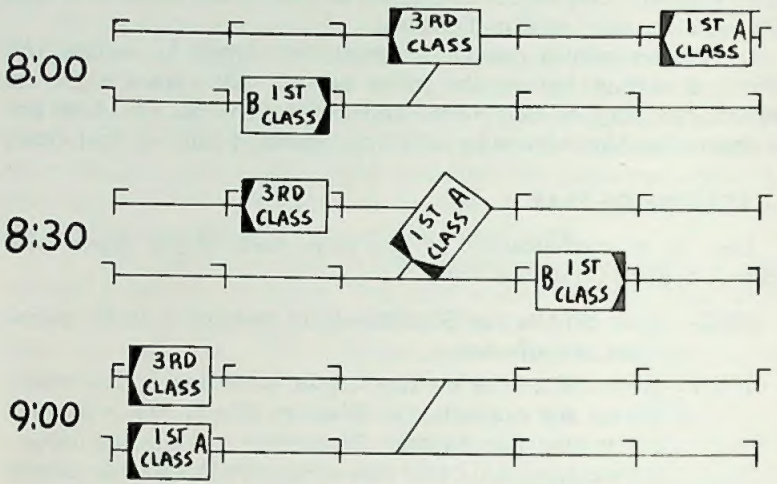
FOUR—Proceed to the next Complete Turn.

VIII. PERSONAL TIMETABLES

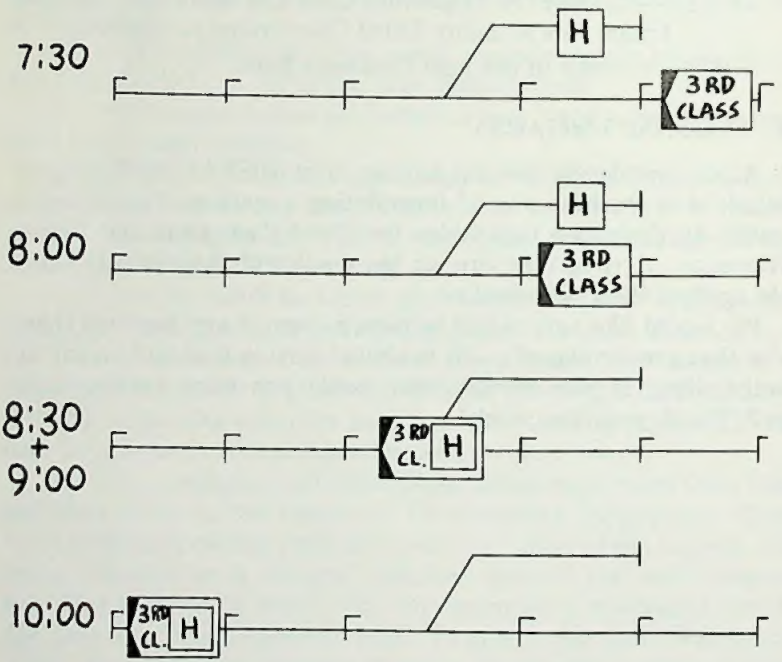
After completing several games, most DISPATCHER players conclude that the best way of formulating a method of operation is to make up their own timetables for Third Class train and Helper movements . . . then they can pit the quality of *their* private timetable against their opponent's.

We would like very much to have a copy of any personal timetables that are developed . . . it is almost certain that no two will be exactly alike. If you develop one, would you mind sending us a copy? Thank you very much!

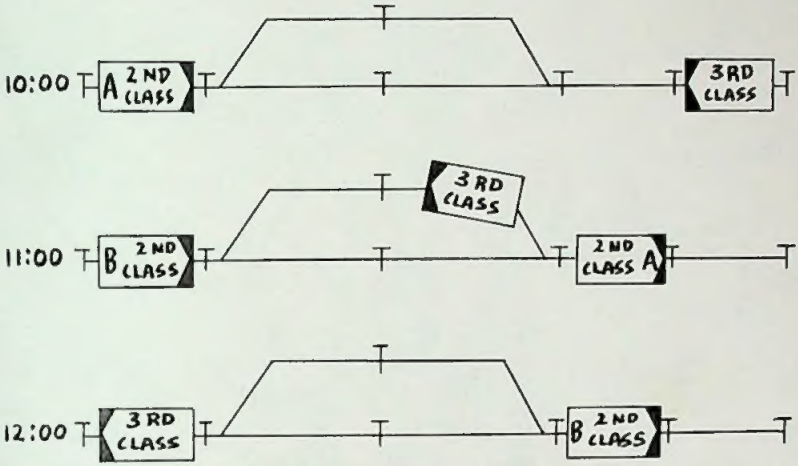
PASSING OPERATION



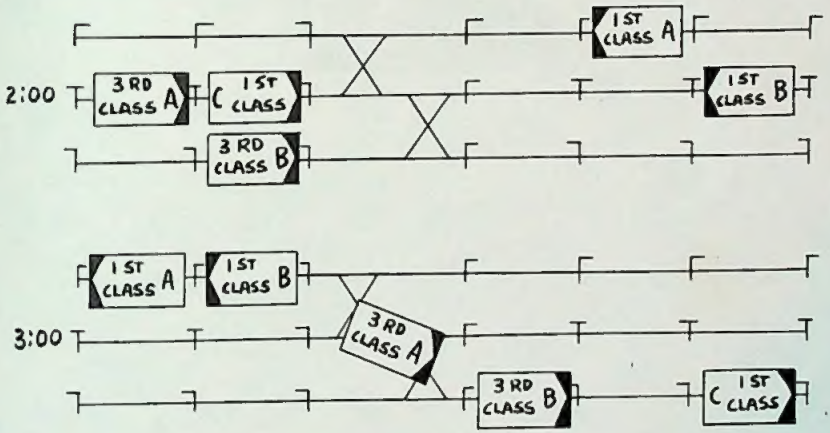
HELPER HOOK-ON



SINGLE TRACK PASSING



THREE TRACK PASSING



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